5. The method of Claim 4 wherein said external device is a storage device.

6. The method of Claim 4 wherein said external device is a heater.

7. The method of Claim 4 wherein said external device is an air conditioner.

8. The method of Claim 4 wherein said external device is a radio receiver.

9. The method of Claim 4 wherein said external device is a computer.

10. The method of Claim 4 wherein said external device is a video recorder.

11. The method of Claim 4 wherein said external device is a printer.

12. The method of Claim 4 wherein said external device is a laser disk.

13. A multimedia receiving apparatus for gathering information on the use of an control signal at said apparatus comprising:

a plurality of input ports for receiving multimedia signals;

an output port

a processor operatively connected to said plurality of input ports and said output ports;

said processor programmed for:

identifying a control signal from at least one of said plurality of input ports;

passing said control signal from said step identifying from said processor to said output port;

communicating information of the passing of said identified control signal from said step of passing to a remote data collection station.

14. The apparatus of Claim 13 wherein said processor is programmed for:

storing said information on the passing of said identified control signal on a storage device before said step of communicating; and

delaying said step of communicating for a predetermined time.

15. The apparatus of Claim 14 wherein said predetermined communication delay is calculated to reduce communication costs.

16. The apparatus of Claim 13 wherein said communication of information from said apparatus to said remote data collection station uses a telephone interface.

17. The apparatus of Claim 13 wherein said output port is connected to an external device.

18. The method of Claim 2 further comprising the step of:

generating a bill for the use of said control signal at said remote station based on the identification and passing of said control signal at said receiver station.

19. The method of Claim 2 further comprising the steps of:

storing information on the passing of said identified control signal on a storage device at said receiver station before said step of communicating;

delaying said step of communicating for a predetermined time.

20. The apparatus of Claim 13 wherein said output port is operatively connected to an internal device.